



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/797,833	03/10/2004	Nobuhiko Mori	791_236	5650
25191	7590	11/17/2005	EXAMINER	
BURR & BROWN PO BOX 7068 SYRACUSE, NY 13261-7068				FERGUSON, LAWRENCE D
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
				1774

DATE MAILED: 11/17/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/797,833	MORI ET AL.	
	Examiner Lawrence D. Ferguson	Art Unit 1774	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 6 and 7 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-5 and 8 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 10 March 2005 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/13/05, 7/14/04
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-5 and 8, drawn to laminated zeolite composite, classified in class 428, subclass 212.
 - II. Claims 6-7, drawn to method of manufacturing a laminated zeolite composite, classified in class 502, subclass 4.
2. Inventions I and II are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make other and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case, the product can be made by immersing an extruded porous substrate in a silica sol-containing sol for membrane formation and forming a MFI membrane on the extruded porous substrate under heating conditions.
3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
4. During a telephone conversation with Stephen Burr on May 9, 2005, a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-5 and 8.

Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action.

Claims 6-7, withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

5. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a petition under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Obvious Double Patenting

6. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

7. Claims 1-5 and 8 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-4 of U.S. Patent No. 6,936,560. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because they both include a laminated zeolite composite, characterized in that it comprises a MFI membrane having a SiO₂/Al₂O₃ molar ratio of 40 to 100, where the MFI membrane is formed on a porous substrate.

U.S. Patent No. 6,936,560 does not show that the laminated zeolite composite has a thickness as in instant claim 2. However, such features are properties which can be easily determined by one of ordinary skill in the art. With regard to the limitation of the thickness, absent a showing of unexpected results, it is obvious to modify the conditions of a composition because they are merely the result of routine experimentation. The experimental modification of prior art in order to optimize operation conditions (e.g. thickness) fails to render claims patentable in the absence of unexpected results. The thickness is optimizable as it directly affects the durability and flexibility of the composite. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make the composite with the limitations of the thickness since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Boesch*, 617 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980). In instant claims 4 and 5, the phrases, "which is used for separation of butane isomers" and "is used for separation of propane and propylene" are intended uses which are given little patentable weight. A recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably

distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In a claim drawn to a process of making, the intended use must result in a manipulative difference as compared to the prior art. See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). Because U.S. Patent No. 6,936,560 has a laminated zeolite composite having an MFI membrane with equivalent materials as the claimed invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art for the MFI membrane to decrease gradually from one side of the membrane contacting the porous substrate toward the other.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103(a)

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 1-5 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lai et al. (U.S. 6,037,292).

Lai discloses a first and second zeolite layer, which are porous and in contact with each other, where the composition may contain a porous substrate in contact with one of the zeolite layers (column 2, lines 1-47). Lai further discloses the thickness of the zeolite layers is within the range of 0.1 to 150um (column 3, lines 35-37). The reference

discloses MFI zeolites (column 3, lines 58-65) where the composition comprises Al₂O₃ and SiO₂ (column 8, lines 13-20). Lai does not explicitly disclose the silica to alumina molar ratio. However, such features are properties which can be easily determined by one of ordinary skill in the art. With regard to the limitation of the silica to alumina molar ratio, absent a showing of unexpected results, it is obvious to modify the conditions of a composition because they are merely the result of routine experimentation. The experimental modification of prior art in order to optimize operation conditions (e.g. silica to alumina molar ratio) fails to render claims patentable in the absence of unexpected results. The thickness is optimizable as it directly affects the durability and flexibility of the composite. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make the composite with the limitations of the silica to alumina molar ratio since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Boesch*, 617 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980). In instant claims 4 and 5, the phrases, "which is used for separation of butane isomers" and "is used for separation of propane and propylene" are intended uses which are given little patentable weight. A recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In a claim drawn to a process of making, the intended use must result in a manipulative difference as compared to the prior art. See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). Because U.S. Patent No. 6,936,560 has a laminated zeolite

composite having an MFI membrane with equivalent materials as the claimed invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art for the MFI membrane to decrease gradually from one side of the membrane contacting the porous substrate toward the other.

Conclusion

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lawrence Ferguson whose telephone number is 571-272-1522. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 9:00 AM – 5:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rena Dye, can be reached on 571-272-3186. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


L. Ferguson
Patent Examiner
AU 1774


RENA DYE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
A.U. 1774 11/14/05